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ALTERNATE FORMATS AND RESOURCES

REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE ALTERNATE FORMATS*

Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, **all public entities are required to ensure “equally effective communication”** of information to all individuals served, including qualified individuals with disabilities. To fulfill this obligation, a public entity may need to provide auxiliary aids and services. Auxiliary aids and services include assistive listening devices, sign language interpreters, and alternate formats -- large print, Braille, computer disk, and audio cassette tape.

Alternate formats of print materials are to be provided just as a public entity would provide any other reasonable accommodation upon request by a qualified person with a disability. There is no obligation to have an alternate format immediately available; no materials are required to be in alternate formats "in case" someone should want that alternate format in the future. However, it may be advisable to have some alternate formats readily available for “high use” publications.

* “Alternative” or “accessible” may also be used to describe non-standard formats

REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE THE FORMAT REQUESTED

A public entity must give “primary consideration” to the specific aid or service requested. For example, if Brailled information is requested, the agency should try to provide the information in Braille. The only circumstances under which an entity may choose not to provide the aid or service requested is if it can demonstrate that another “equally effective means of providing access” is available or that use of the means requested would result in undue financial or administrative hardships.

Providing alternate formats is not just an issue of disability laws compliance, but of good customer service.

If someone requests a certain alternate format, you may offer other alternatives.

For example, if someone requests information in Braille, you may mention that you can also provide it on computer disk. The individual may opt for the computer disk, not knowing that was an option, or may confirm the request for Braille. The person may not have a computer or may simply prefer to have a “hard copy” of the information.

Dependent upon the information requested in Braille, **you may determine the request is not a reasonable accommodation.** If someone requested a bus schedule in Braille, it may not be a reasonable accommodation. In this case you might refer the person to other options, e.g., a Rider Information Line or the Web site.

NOTIFICATION OF AVAILABILITY OF ALTERNATE FORMATS

In all print materials, there must be a statement that lets people know that alternate formats are available upon request for people with disabilities. There is no specific language prescribed for the notification.

Some examples for the text of that notification:

- ◆ Information presented here is available in alternate formats.
- ◆ This material is available in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities upon request by calling [name and telephone number, including a TTY number, if there is one].
- ◆ This information will be provided in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities upon request. [Here the presumption is that the office's contact information is included elsewhere in the print material and the person will know whom to call to request an alternate format.]
- ◆ This material will be provided in alternate formats such as Braille, large print, audio cassette, or computer disk to individuals with disabilities upon request.

It is recommended that the notification sentence be in a sans serif, 14-18 point font so individuals who may need an alternate format (large print) will be able to read that it is available. "Producing Materials in Alternate Formats, A Guide for Agencies," is available from the (Washington State) Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, 360-438-3168 Voice; 360-438-3167 TTY; toll free 1-800-949-4232.

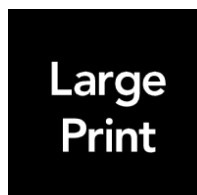
Public Hearings with Print Information

If you will be providing print materials at a public hearing, be sure to note on the public hearing notices that print materials are available in alternate formats by calling [name] at [telephone numbers, including TTY] by [date -- deadline]. This will help ensure that everyone will have access to information at the public hearing, and that you will have enough time to prepare the alternate formats requested.

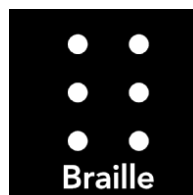
Symbols You Can Use to Indicate Availability of Alternate Formats

There are symbols that can help you advertise your available alternate formats. You are encouraged to place these symbols next to the relevant information in your publications such as program brochures, application forms, event flyers, public meeting or hearing notices, etc.

Here are symbols that denote alternate format access:



Large print version available
(symbol should be 18 point+)



Brailled version available

HOW TO PROVIDE ALTERNATE FORMATS

Provide the requested alternate format in a timely fashion. Dependent upon the format requested, it may take a few minutes, a day, a week, or more to provide the alternate format. Making a large print version or putting the document on a computer diskette may be easily and quickly accomplished. Providing a Braille version of information may take up to a week or longer, dependent upon the length and complexity of the document.

When providing alternate formats, it is not necessary to include any special design elements, graphics, or formatting in the original publication. Reasonable accommodation is about ensuring everyone has access to the same information.

Large Print

This is one of the easier alternate formats to provide if the document was produced by one of the common word processing programs (e.g., Word or WordPerfect). When someone requests a document in large print, remember to ask if there is a preferred font style and/or font size because individual needs vary. One person may request the document in Univers 14-point font, while another may request **Arial 18-point bold font**. As a default, use Arial font. After changing the font, you may need to do some reformatting; sometimes making a large print version “throws off” a document, just as changing margins can.

If the document is produced by software such as PageMaker, we have been told it may take more time, as conversion to a more easily manipulated document may be required.

Computer Disk

This is a relatively easily accomplished alternate format, particularly if the document was produced by one of the common word processing programs (e.g., Word or WordPerfect). If the individual does not request the document to be a certain type of file, remember to ask. You want to be sure the type of document you have is compatible with the individual's software.

Sometimes, simply saving a copy of the original document onto a disk will fulfill the individual's request. Occasionally, you may need to bring up the file, then save it as a different "type" of document onto a disk. For example, you may typically save documents in Word 6.0. You have a request to provide the document on disk as a WordPerfect 5.1 document. Within the "Save As" dialogue box in Word, you have the option to select WordPerfect 5.1 in the "Save as type" section, just below "File name." Other options for "types" of files include MS-DOS text and Word for Macintosh.

Braille

If you do not have an internal Braille service, you will need to use an outside vendor. Because of this, it will take more time to provide Braille versions of documents.

If the document is fairly short and straightforward, you may get a document Brailled within a few days. If the document is longer and/or complex, you will need to confirm delivery date with the vendor. If the information is already a Word, WordPerfect, or text file document, you can simply e-mail the document to the Braille vendor. If it is in PageMaker, you will need to convert it to an acceptable "type of file" prior to sending it to the vendor. If it is some other type of document, contact the vendor to see what you will need to provide for them to do the Brailleing.

In responding to a Braille request, ask whether the person wants the document in Braille Grade 1 or Grade 2. Grade 1 consists of the standard Braille alphabet, with no contractions or abbreviations; Grade 2, or "contracted Braille," is much more widely used as it is faster and easier for skilled Braille readers. Tell the Braille vendor which Braille grade to produce.

If the File is Not Word, WordPerfect, or a Text File

You may need to bring up the file, then save it as a different "type" of document onto a disk. For example, you may typically save documents in Word 6.0. You may have a request to provide the document on disk as a WordPerfect 5.1 document. Within the "Save As" dialogue box in Word, you have the option to select WordPerfect 5.1 in the "Save as type" section, just below "File name." Other options for "types" of files include MS-DOS text and Word for Macintosh.

See next page for alternate format vendors

Sources for Alternate Formats (within Washington)

Note: Inclusion in this resource list does not constitute endorsement by King County government, nor does omission imply non-endorsement. Our goal is to provide you with information on some key resources available. Let us know if you're aware of a useful resource missing from this list.

Braille Transcription

Washington Braille Access Center

Washington School for the Blind
2310 East 13th Street
Vancouver, Washington 98661

Web site: www.wssb.wa.gov

Contacts: Colleen Lines
Kandi Lukowski
Telephone: 360-696-6321, ext. 158
TTY: 360-696-6321, ext. 171
Fax: 360-737-2120
e-mail: braille@wssb.wa.gov

General Instructions:

- ◆ you may send the document to be Brailled by e-mail, fax or on disk
- ◆ the file should be in Word, WordPerfect, text file, or PDF
- ◆ if the file is in PageMaker, you will need to convert it to a different type of file
- ◆ if you have only a print copy, it can be scanned or re-typed for an additional fee
- ◆ include instructions on whether to produce it in Contracted (Grade 2) or Uncontracted Braille (Grade 1)
- ◆ costs vary, so confirm estimated cost with the vendor you select
- ◆ Brailled materials will be sent to you with an invoice, or the vendor may be willing to send materials directly to the individual and the invoice to you
- ◆ you may request that the Braille materials be sent directly to the individual free of charge via the U.S. Postal Service "Free Matter for the Blind"
- ◆ spreadsheets and graphs can be Brailled.

Spreadsheets and Graphs

Spreadsheets and graphs can be Brailled, but in a different format according to the Braille Code.

Audio Cassette Tape

State Audio Services

Department: Disability Support Services
Central Washington University
400 E.University Way
Ellensburg, Washington 98926-7431

Attn: Pam Wilson
Telephone: 509-963-2171
TTY: 509-963-2143
Fax: 509-963-3235
e-mail: WilsonP@cwu.edu

Send a print copy of the material you need recorded. Within a day or two, they will fax back a quote and an order form.

FREE POSTAGE WHEN MAILING BRAILLE, LARGE PRINT, AND AUDIO TAPES

Most alternate formatted materials can be mailed free through the U.S. Postal Service to people who are blind, low vision, or who cannot use or read conventionally printed materials due to a physical disability. This includes brochures, information sheets, booklets, and other reading matter, in Braille, large print (14-point or larger), or on tape. To use this service, omit stamps and print the words **Free Matter for the Blind & Handicapped** in the upper right hand corner of the envelope or package. These materials are subject to inspection by the Postal Service and may not contain any advertising. Handwritten or typewritten letters are subject to regular postage.